Rev. Mr. Harris's

MASONIC SERMON.

BRITISH MUSEUM

3264

MASONIC EMBLEMS EXPLAINED.

IN A

SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE *MEMBERS*

OF

King Solomon's Lodge,

OF

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS,

IN CHARLESTOWN, JUNE 24, A.L. 5796.

BEING THE

FESTIVAL OF *ST. JOHN* THE BAPTIST.

BY

THADDEUS MASON HARRIS, *M.A. F.H.S.*

"Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and, if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." *PHILIPPIANS III. 15.*

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM SPOTSWOOD FOR THE SUBSCRIBERS.

JULY, 1796.

BRITISH MUSEUM

AT A

MEETING *of* King Solomon's Lodge *of* Free and Accepted Maſons *at* Warren-Hall *in* Charleſtown, 24th June, A.L. 5796.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY,

THAT the Right Worſhipful John Soley, (jun.) Maſter; brother Eliphalet Newell, S. Warden, and brother John Lamſon, be a Committee to wait on the Rev. brother Thaddeus M. Harris with the Thanks of *King Solomon's Lodge*, for the learned, ingenious, and truly Maſonic Diſcourſe pronounced by him this day, and requeſt a copy for the preſs.

True Copy from the Records,

JOHN LAMSON, Secy.

CHARLESTOWN,
JUNE 24th, 5796.

Reply to the Committee, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

You will pleaſe to deſire my Brethren of the Lodge you repreſent, to accept of my thanks for their candor and flattering partiality. As a Member of the Lodge, compliance with all their requeſts is a duty. I muſt only regret that in the preſent inſtance I make a return ſo very inadequate to their repeated diſtinctions, and ſo very ſhort of my own wiſhes.

T. M. Harris.

Dorchester,
July 7, 1796.

MASONIC EMBLEMS

EXPLAINED.

MATTHEW X. 16.

BEHOLD I SEND YOU FORTH AS SHEEP AMONG WOLVES: BE YE THEREFORE WISE AS SERPENTS AND HARMLESS AS DOVES.

In theſe words our Saviour addreſſed his Apoſtles, whom he ſent forth into the world to teach and to recommend his religion by their inſtruction and example. At the ſame time he very frankly warned them of the dangers to which they would be expoſed, and counſelled them how to conduct ſo as to ſhun, or to bear, the oppoſition they muſt expect. Making a ſtrong and expreſſive alluſion to the known qualities of ſome of the inferior animals, he bid them take a hint of the expediency of non-reſiſtance from the ſheep, a leſſon of wiſdom from the ſerpent, a recommenda-

tion of harmleſsneſs from the dove. Such alluſions to ſenſible objects was one of the earlieſt, the eaſieſt, and moſt engaging methods of inſtructing mankind in moral and divine truths. Aſſembling images from nature, it ſpeaks to the underſtanding by the ſenſes. Theſe pleaſing illuſtrations lead us, by an eaſy proceſs, to form the moſt important, and often times the moſt ſublime ideas, from things moſt familiar and intelligible. Hence the loftineſs of ſtyle and ſentiment, the rich imagery, the animated deſcription, the enchanting grace, which pervade and embelliſh all the productions of the Eaſt. And hence the admirable tiſſue of allegory with which they decorated wiſdom and virtue.—This method of imparting the moſt ſage and ſalutary leſſons was, by our Lord, repeatedly uſed with the happieſt efficacy. Our text is a pleaſing inſtance. The purport of the advice it contains is, that his diſciples ſhould act with prudence, caution, and mildneſs; and exhibit ſuch traits of inoffenſiveneſs, wiſdom, and innocence, as to give no occaſion for any thing to be alleged againſt them or their doctrine, nor any handle for their being ill uſed. Theſe admonitions, my hearers, are ſtill important and ſalutary.

No individual perſon, nor any body of men, can be beyond the neceſſity of their ſervice. And there is ſcarcely a day but calls for their exerciſe and diſplays their utility. Let me aſſure myſelf, then, that this large and reſpectable aſſembly will not be diſpleaſed if I dwell, a little, upon the important qualities enjoined and recommended in our text: while my beloved brethren of the FREE MASON SOCIETY acknowledge my obedience to their commiſſion, in my public defence and illuſtration of their primary and favorite principles.

SINCE he who is "the Mighty Counſellor" hath thought fit to ſet forth this inſtruction, to which I would lead you, under the expreſſive emblems of the SHEEP, the SERPENT, and the DOVE, it may be very proper for us to obſerve what there is in theſe animals that affords matter for our imitation with reference to our conducting of ourſelves in the world.

I. FROM the *ſheep* we may learn PATIENCE and SILENCE. Theſe are, on many occaſions, very becoming, diſcreet, and laudable: but pre-eminently requiſite in ſituations expoſed to diſingenuous oppoſition or taunting

reproach. In ſuch circumſtances the bleſſed Saviour gave theſe qualities the expreſſive recommendation of his own example. "He was led as a lamb to the ſlaughter; and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth."

II. OUR LORD, deſigning to join WISDOM and INNOCENCE together, propoſes the *ſerpent* for the one, and the *dove* for the other; to let his diſciples know that he allows them ſo much wiſdom as is conſiſtent with innocence, and perſuades them to no more ſimplicity than is conſiſtent with wiſdom.[1] A reference is made to the *commendable* qualities of *both*; that what was wanting in one might be ſupplied from the other; and that from their conjunction might reſult a perfect wiſdom free from all guile, and a well guarded innocence without the leaſt mixture of indiſcretion. This would produce a character at once ſuperior to the iniquitous contrivance of fraud and the yielding timorouſneſs of mental imbecility: too generous to impoſe upon others, and too cautious to be impoſed upon.

WHATEVER ſkill or prudence we may poſſeſs ſeparate from inoffenſiveneſs, our ſkill is

dangerous, and our prudence ineffectual: the former may terminate in deſtructive miſchief, and the latter degenerate into contracted ſelfiſhneſs. Wiſdom without innocence turns into craft and cunning, and ſimplicity without wiſdom is mere folly.[2]—So hazardous, alſo, is our ſituation amidſt the corruptions of the world, that even blameleſsneſs yields not ſecurity:[3] it will only expoſe us unleſs it be guarded by diſcretion. The Chriſtian Fathers often inſiſt upon both of theſe, and join them together. "Let no man impoſe upon you, ſaith Ignatius,[4] and ſee that you do not impoſe upon any one." Jerom thus recommends;[5] "have the ſimplicity of the dove, that thou mayeſt not contrive to cheat any one; and the warineſs of the ſerpent that thou mayeſt not be ſupplanted by the ſnares that others lay for thee." Gregory Nazianzen ſaid of his father that "he neither ſuffered the wiſdom of the ſerpent to degenerate into cunning, nor the innocence of the dove into indiſcretion; but made up one complete kind of virtue from the union of both together."[6] This union he afterwards deſcribes under the name of "goodneſs combined with underſtanding:" by Hilary it is called "wiſe ſim-

plicity."[7] It is this union of WISDOM and INNOCENCE which perfects the character of man. It gives him all that commands reſpect and conciliates eſteem; all that is venerable, and all that is lovely. The injunction, then, may bear repeating, that we blend the wiſdom of the ſerpent without its malignity, with the innocence of the dove without its ſillineſs. In ſhort, to deſignate our wiſdom as coming *from above*, it muſt be "firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocriſy."

THESE hints for the better underſtanding of the text being premiſed, let us proceed to conſider theſe things ſeparately; that is to ſay, let us inſtance wherein we may lawfully imitate the wiſdom of the ſerpent, or advantageouſly diſplay the harmleſsneſs of the dove.

FROM remoteſt antiquity to the preſent day the ſerpent has been remarkable for a peculiar penetration and artfulneſs.[8] This rendered him, unhappily, a fit inſtrument, under the management of the malignant deceiver, to effectuate the fall of man. This natural ſaga-

city was not evil in itſelf, however the abuſe of it, by the Devil's means, was unſpeakably evil and deſtructive. [9]

FROM this diſaſterous period enmity irreconcilable has ſubſiſted between the ſerpent and man. It is natural for us to dread even the tool by which we have been wounded, though we cannot predicate guilt of the inſtrument, or rationally account for our averſion. But this need not prejudice us againſt the inſtruction we may hence derive. Let me make the creature which was inſtrumental in teaching our progenitor evil and miſery, inſtrumental in teaching us, his deſcendants, good and happineſs.

1. THE firſt leſſon of wiſdom we may learn from the ſerpent is that of PRUDENCE. This animal is ſaid always to endeavour, when aſſaulted to defend his *head;* he ſecures *that*, if it be poſſible, though the body be expoſed. [10] It becomes us, in imitation of this, when expoſed to danger, to take care to defend and ſecure the capital, the principal, the chief concern.*

* "The *prudent* man foreſeeth the evil and hideth himſelf." Prov. xxii. 3.

2. We may learn from the ſerpent PERSPICACITY and CIRCUMSPECTION. The antients have celebrated all the ſpecies for *quickneſs of ſight*.[11] Hence the poets have placed them as keepers of the garden of the Heſperides.[12] He who has joined *prudence* to his *wiſdom* will acquire *theſe* alſo. He will look about him: eſpy both his advantage and his danger; eſpecially if by diſcerning the latter he may know how to bring about the former. His watchfulneſs will either prevent the evil which is deſigned againſt him, or to which he is expoſed, or it will enable him to provide againſt it effectually.

3. We are taught by the example of the ſerpent, the advantages of SECRECY and RETIREMENT. He owes to them his ſafety and repoſe. In them *we* may find ſecurity, tranquility, and peace. In the ſacred ſilence of retreat from the world the mind collects its powers and rebraces its energies. There we find leiſure, opportunity, and inclination to think and to reſolve; and there acquire the ability and the vigor to perform. There, too, we eſcape from temptation, diſembarraſs our perplexities, and get beyond the reach of care.

There we acquire the knowledge of ourſelves; hear the "ſtill ſmall voice" of reaſon and of conſcience which was drowned in the noiſe and buſtle of life; and there we find acceſs to the Divinity. "The eye which ſeeth in ſecret" beholds as with complacency: while the benignity of his love hides us with ſheltering ſafety in the receſſes of his pavilion.

4. The ſerpent is ſaid to evade the force of the enchanter by laying one ear cloſe to the ground, and ſtopping the other by the extreme end of his body.[13] Let us hence take a hint of caution to ſhut our ears to the enchantments of pleaſure and voluptuouſneſs, the ſpells of wealth, the deluſions of ambition, and the temptations of ſin. If we give ear to them we may be ſeduced from the ſecure condition of innocence and duty, to the ruinous one of guilt and apoſtacy.

5. It is obſerved of ſerpents that they caſt off their old ſkins in the ſpring,[14] and a new one ſucceeds them, and they grow, as it were young again.[14] It may be proper for us, in imitation of this, to throw aſide our rough exterior, and become ſmooth, pliant, and in-

ſinuating.[15] Moroſity and auſterity are no parts of the wiſdom we are recommending. They are "the ſuperfluous matter which muſt be knocked off."—External embelliſhment is not to be diſregarded. Many people form their opinion at firſt ſight. The outward deportment ſhould be prepoſſeſſing: it ſhould have a poliſhed grace. Then it will prove a kind of letter of introduction to the good opinion of thoſe who have not better means of knowing us. By becoming more agreeable we may render ourſelves the more uſeful. But the man of roughneſs will be either neglected or deſpiſed.

THERE is an inference yet more inſtructive and important to be derived from this peculiar circumſtance in the hiſtory of the ſerpent. We are by it reminded of that MORAL RENOVATION of life our religion enjoins. Would we become "wiſe unto ſalvation," we muſt "put off the old man, be renewed in the ſpirit of our minds, and put on the new man which is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs."*

* Ephes. iv. 22. Col. iii. 9.

AND, then ſtill farther may we extend the metaphor to that more perfect transformation, when our vile bodies ſhall be changed after the faſhion of Chriſt's moſt glorious body, and this mortal ſhall be clothed with immortality.

THESE *three ſtages* of advance, from unformed roughneſs to complete perfection, are underſtood by my brethren of the Lodge in a manner emphatically clear and important. Here they evolve ſome of the ſublimeſt myſteries of Free Maſonry. But here a ſolemn awe pervades my ſoul: nor would my trembling hand preſume to draw aſide the veil which hides the bright tranſcendency of wiſdom.

III. LET us turn, my brethren, from ineffable wonders and overdazzling ſplendors to the contemplation of thoſe mild and lovely graces prefigured to us in the ſymbol of the *dove*. Thus we ceaſe to gaze at the glorious magnificence of the ſetting ſun, to view the tempered radiance of the ſtarry ſky.

WITHOUT dwelling upon particulars, it will be ſufficient here to enumerate ſome of thoſe qualities aſcribable to the dove proper

for our imitation. At the head of theſe are HARMLESSNESS, MILDNESS, and INNOCENCE. The bird has always been the emblem of theſe. Indeed it is ſo remarkable for being placid and gentle that the antients ſuppoſed it had no gall.[15]—Doves are, alſo, FAMILIAR, FRIENDLY, and PEACEABLE. They take injuries rather than offer them. They are likewiſe ſignalized for being PURE and CHASTE, very LOVING and very CONSTANT in affection. They ſeem to have A SOCIAL DISPOSITION, and go in flocks. And they are ſaid to be PITIFUL and COMPASSIONATE.* Such lovely qualities have always inſured them the protection and endeared to the partiality of man. *Lodges* are erected for them near our houſes; and *refreſhment* furniſhed them from our own ſupplies. And with ſuch pleaſing monitors, my friends, before our eyes, ¡Shall we not be prompted and allured to every thing amiable, endearing, and kind! ¡Shall we not ſoar above each low and ſordid ſcene of vice and wanton folly, and ſtretch our eager pinions towards the ſky! ¡And, tired with earth and vanity, take to

* Theſe qualities are alluded to in Iſai. xxxviii. 14. lix. 11. Nah. ii. 7.

ourſelves wings as a dove, and fly away and be at reſt!

THUS, my hearers, have I endeavoured to convey to you ſome of the ideas which preſented their ſelves in contemplating our text. I hope the leſſons of WISDOM and INNOCENCE, will be allowed *a general application*, although the enumerated qualities of the one and the other are purely Maſonic. Not that they are the prevailing features in every Maſon's character; for there are bad men among us,[16] as well as amongſt chriſtians, and other aſſociations for virtue. Theſe are ſpots in our, and in their, feaſts of charity. But the moralities pointed out are the acknowledged, appropriate, articles of every Maſon's creed. In our lodges they are illuſtrated by the moſt expreſſive ſymbols, recommended by the moſt engaging examples, and enforced by the moſt pathetic lectures: while the ſignet of heavenly TRUTH ſtamps them, on every yielding, receptive, heart, in characters indelible. This ſolemn declaration I make in the fear of GOD, as well as love of the Brethren.

IN concluſion, allow me to obſerve to you that though you ſhould underſtand all myſte-

ries and all knowledge, and have not CHARITY, it will profit you nothing. In vain is it, my brethren, that you have been illuminated by a ſun more glorious than that which rules the day, if its kindly beams have not warmed and melted your heart to ſoftenings of love and generoſity. "To do good, then, and to communicate forget not, for with ſuch ſacrifices GOD is well pleaſed." An opportunity is now offered for that liberal beſtowment of alms ſo grateful to the indigent receiver, ſo honorable to the generous beſtower, and ſo acceptable to the Lord of mercy, who acknowledges the ſmalleſt inſtance of relief done for one of the leaſt of theſe his brethren as beſtowed on his ſelf.

IN pleading for the poor of this town I can uſe all the emphaſis which confraternity in alliance and affection excites. Here are my deareſt kindred and friends. Here firſt I drew the vital air; and with it inhaled a ſentiment of partiality for my native place which has blended itſelf with all the affections of my heart, and breathed in all my prayers to heaven. Having, with my beloved Parents, ſhared deeply in the diſtreſſes and deſolations which war occaſioned here, moſt ſenſibly can

I feel for thoſe who yet ſink under the accumulated preſſure of diſappointed expectations and penurious circumſtances. And devoutly do I hope that thoſe who ſhare a kindlier fate will now be excited tenderly to commiſerate and bountifully to relieve their unfortunate brethren.

PERMIT me, my fellow townſmen, on this day *conſecrated to the memory of worth departed*, to tender you the condolences of my ſympathy upon the recent death of two moſt valued members of our community. A RUSSELL and a GORHAM are loſt indeed to earth, though gained to heaven. To the circle of private relations and extenſive friendſhip they were deſervedly and invaluably dear: their removal from theſe is felt with all the poignancy of remedileſs grief.—To the intereſts of their country, of humanity, and of virtue, they were patrons whoſe loſs is irreparable.—But they have left us the bright legacy of their example. Let us all ſtrive to emulate their never to be forgotten excellencies; and our names ſhall be recorded with theirs in the regiſtry of immortal glory.

Authorities and Notes.

1. "Ἐστι δὲ ὁ ὄφις καὶ βλαπτικὸς τοῦ, κελεύει ἡμᾶς ἀκεραίους εἶναι, τοῦ λέγειν, ἁπλοῦς καὶ ἀπονήρους, καὶ μὴ βλαπτικοὺς ὡς ἂν πειρῶτο."
THEOPHYLACT. ad loc. p. 53.

2. "Scientia, quæ a juſtitiâ et honeſtate ſejuncta eſt, caliditas potius quam ſapientia eſt appellanda."
CICERO, de offic. l. 1.

"Prudentia, abſque ſimplicitate, malitia eſt: et ſimplicitas, abſque ratione, ſtultitia nominatur."
HIERON. ſuper Oſeam.

3. "Parum tuta per ſe ipſa probitas eſt."
SALUST.

4. "Μὴ ἐν τῇς ὑμᾶς ἐξαπαλάτω, ὥσπερ καὶ ἐξαπαλᾶσθε."
IGNATIUS, epiſt. ad Ephes.

5. "Habeto ſimplicitatem columbæ, ne cuiquam machineris dolos; et ſerpentis aſtutiam, ne aliorum ſupplanteris inſidiis." HIERON. epiſt. ad Paulin.

6. GREGOR. NAZIANZ. Orat. 19.

7. Χρηστὸς συνέσει κεκραμένη." NAZIANZ.
"Sapiens ſimplicitas." HILARY.
"Prudens ſimplicitas." [MARTIAL, epigr. 7. lib. 10.]

8. See ſome very remarkable ſtories of the ſagacity of ſerpents in PLINY, Nat. Hiſt. l. vii. c. 23, 27.

9. The character which is given of this animal by the ſacred hiſtorian, Geneſis 3d chapter, may denote rather his gentle, free, and inſinuating, nature, than any original maliciouſneſs: that, before the fall, the ſerpent was mild, tractable, and more familiar with man than any other creature; and ſtrongly intimates that he had won the attention and gained the good liking of our firſt parents. For when GOD ſays he will put enmity between the ſerpent and wo-

man, the implication muſt be that there was ſome ſort of kindneſs and friendſhip between them before. This was the ſentiment of the antient and modern Jews, and of ſeveral of the Chriſtian Fathers. [*See* JOSEPHUS, *antiq. lib.* 1. c. 2. Rabbi ISAAC ABARBINEL. R. MAIMONIDES, *more nevochim*, p. xi. c. 30. R. MENACHEM. BASIL, *homil. de paradiſo.* DAMASCEN. de fide, l. 2. c. 10.] And it may be well to recollect that the Hebrew word [*gnarum*, whence the Latin word *gnarus*] here tranſlated *ſubtil* does not ſignify craft, or inſidiouſneſs, but *knowing;* and ſo the Seventy Interpreters have rendered it. [Φρονιμωτατος; which is the Greek word our Saviour uſes in the text we are explaining: φρονμοι.]

"It is no way unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that this creature was beloved both by Adam and Eve: ſhe eſpecially was delighted with it, and uſed to play and ſport with it. She laid it, perhaps, in her boſom, adorned her neck with its windings, or made it a bracelet for her arms. So that its being ſo intimate with the woman made it the proper inſtrument for the devil's purpoſe, who ſliding himſelf into it, might wantonly play before her until he inſenſibly brought her to the forbidden tree; and then, twiſting round its branches, might take of the fruit and eat, to ſhew her by experience that there was nothing of death contained in it, before he began to beſpeak her; and his ſpeech might be the leſs ſurprizing to her, becauſe ſhe might probably think (as he perhaps might affirm) that this new acquired faculty proceeded from the virtue of the fruit."

STACKHOUSE'S *Hiſt. of the Bible*, v i. p. 452. ed. 8vo.
DELANY'S *revelation exam. with candor, diſſert.* vi.

10. "In præſentiſſimo vitæ periculo totum corpus ictibus objiciunt, ut caput occultent atque integrum ſervent."

PLIN. *nat. hiſt.*

"Ολον το σωμα παραδιδωσι την κεφαλην μονον φυλαττει."

CHRYSOSTOM, in Pſal. cxiv.

11. "Οξυδερκεις." So οφις, the name of the ſerpent, comes from the verb οπτομαι, *to ſee.*

———" tam cernis acutum
Quam aut aquila, aut ſerpens epidaurius."

HOR. *lib.* 1. *ſat.* 3.

12. DIOD. 4. OVID, *metam.* iv. 637. ix. 90. HYGIN, *tab.* 30. APOLLOD. iii. c. 5. HESIOD. *theogn.* v. 215. It is ſtrange that thoſe who have pretended to explain the antient mythology have not diſcovered in this fable the lineaments of reſemblance to the hiſtory which Moſes gives of the fall of man. One can ſurely ſee here the prohibited apples, the guarded tree, and the ſerpent.

13. BOCHART. *hieroz. tom.* 2. l. 3. c. 6. CALMET, *diſſert. in Pſal.* lviii. 4, 5.

14. EPIPHANIUS, ſpeaking of this property of the ſerpent, ſays " εκβαλλει το γηρας," *he puts off his old age.*— See alſo ARISTOT. *hiſt. an.* l. 8.—So the antients repreſented Æſculapius with a ſnake in his hand, to ſignify his ſkill in renewing men's bodies which had been diſeaſed.

15. PLIN. *nat. hiſt.* l. 10. c. 34. OVID *metamorp.* l. 7. v. 369. CLEMENS ALEX. *pædag.* l. 1. c. 5. TERTUL. *de baptiſmo*, c. 8. ISIODOR. *orig.* l. 12.

" Μηδενι βροτος κακως ανταμειβομενοι φασι γαρ ακακον την περιςεραν, ϗ μηδ' εχειν χολοδοχον οργανον."

CÆSARIUS, *dial.* 4. *ap.* 191.

" Ανδρα μη εχοντα χολην αυτοφυως, αλλ' αφ' ετερου δεχομενον γραφοντες Αιγυπτιοι περιςεραν ζωγαφουσιν, εχουσαν τα οπισθια ορθα. εκ εκεινοις γαρ την χολην εχει."

HORAPOLLINIS. *hierogl. l.* 2. c. 48.

16. " SOL non omnes, quibus licet, etiam calefacit, ſic SAPIENTIA multos quos docet quid ſit faciendum non continuo etiam accendit ad faciendum. Aliud eſt multas divitias ſcire, aliud eſt poſſidere : nec notitia divitem facit, ſed poſſeſſio." S. BERNARD.

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